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AUTHOR	Eiduson, Bernice T.
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ABSTRACT

This report describes a project designed to explore the feasibility of undertaking a systematic 6-year longitudinal study of how children being reared in alternative family life styles are being socialized and how these patterns of socialization affect the development of the children. Pilot investigations were conducted to (1) identify the populations of interest; (2) establish their accessibility to study; (3) review modes of assessment appropriate to children in alternative family environments; and (4) become familiar with dimensions of child growth and development considered relevant to alternative family styles. Four child populations were studied (and are described briefly in this report): three represent alternative family styles ("unmarried marrieds," single mothers and families living in communes) and one represents the traditional two-parent family and serves as a control. These pilot studies showed that the longitudinal study is feasible. (MG)

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CHILDREN WITH DEVIANT EARLY DEVELOPMENTAL EXPERIENCES

PROJECT CONDUCTED UNDER THE SUPPORT OF THE OFFICE OF
CHILD DEVELOPMENT: OCD CB 166
April 1, 1972 - August 30, 1973

Bernice T. Eiduson, Ph. D., Principal Investigator
Department of Psychiatry
University of California at Los Angeles

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ERICKSON, BERNICE T., Principal Investigator

FINAL REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE OFFICE OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT
PROJECT TITLE: CHILDREN WITH DEVIANT DEVELOPMENTAL EXPERIENCES
GRANT NO: OCD CB 166
DATES: 4/1/72 - 8/30/73

I. SUMMARY OF PROGRESS

This project has undertaken a series of pilot studies devoted to determining the feasibility of undertaking a six-year longitudinal study of children who are being reared in alternative family stules.

The project has involved the preliminary study of four child populations: three representing alternative family styles, the experimental groups, and one representing the two-parent nuclear family, the "traditional family," serving as a control.

Since these family variants are occurring among young people of child-bearing age (1), and since the research data on the socialization of infants and young children show the importance of the family as the mediating agent for the child's interaction with institutions (2), it seemed important to understand how children growing up in alternative life styles are being socialized, and what the implications of these patterns of socialization are for the growth and well-being of the child. What do they mean for his physical and psychological development, and what is their importance for the interfacing with existing institutions that the child will confront as he grows up, and moves more directly into Establishment society.

In order to determine whether these questions could be meaningfully researched in systematic child development studies, this year's work had been devoted to conducting a series of pilot investigations which have been aimed at:

a. identifying the populations of interest;
b. establishing their accessibility to study;
c. reviewing modes of assessment appropriate to children in alternative family environments;
d. becoming familiar with dimensions of child growth and development that were considered relevant to the alternative family stules.

The pilot work was motivated by the pragmatic evidence that many variants of the two-parent nuclear family were appearing on the American middle class scene (3) and that little systematic data had been collected on children in these families (4).

Children had been mentioned superficially and in an off-handed way in most of the writing on the counter-cultures. The bulk of the lively journalistic

and social science interest in alienated young people had been devoted to their struggles to separate themselves and to be separated from the Establishment (5); with their value systems and beliefs (6); and with the life styles which they set up in order to have an opportunity to live in ways that would better express both their values and their outrage at traditional and "system-bound" ways of living (7). The most telling reports have come from journalistic documentation, often self-revelatory (8). These books compare in interest, if not depth, with the fascinating historical research accounts of earlier attempts in American history to cope with difference, disappointment, frustration, and denial by the majority of society (9). In these latter, the role of children is given some attention, particularly as the structure of the groups, as intentional communes, aimed at complete self-sustenance and isolation from involvement with formal institutions in the outside community. Then planning for the children's upbringing and education and roles grew out of a need to formalize structures and responsibility and out a sense of commitment to the group, and to guarantee its perpetuity (10).

In the accounts of current alternative life styles, children have generally been more casually treated, an indication perhaps of their more informally developed roles. In pilot work, all references to children in twelve columes on alternative life styles were collated, and a content analysis of specific dimensions related to demographic and behavioral characteristics -- as the number involved, their activities, roles, the caretaking arrangements to which they were exposed, their eating, sleeping, play arrangements (11). These volumes dealt primarily with communes, but also included bibliographies on single mothers who establish one-parent families by keeping their infants, and group marriage arrangements.

It was evident from these accounts -- which are admittedly more journalistic than scholarly, though not completely so -- that children were by and large a secondary source of concern. That is, the life styles had been entered into by parents because of their own needs, desires, motivations and preferences; and that the needs of children had usually been thought afterward to be also well-met in the arrangement that had emerged in order to meet the need of the parent. This is not to say that no thought was given to child care and to optimizing the child's environment in line with what parents regarded as valuable psychological and physical nutrients for growth. In some cases this was indicated in these accounts. And in subsequent pilot work undertaken by this project through detailed, standardized depth interviews and home observations, this had been shown not only to be the case, but even to a degree which is scarcely matched in other than highly sophisticated day-care centers or Kibbutz-like family models (12). Furthermore, in these reports, the meshing between parent needs and child needs often appeared very skillful, so that it was arbitrary to try to say how the arrangement was actually effected, or why.

Nevertheless, this content analysis piece of work did direct the project's attention to the more peripheral role of the child at this early stage in the development of alternate family styles when a good deal of pioneering experimentation was taking place.*

Another child development issue that initially attracted our investigatory attention was derived from the raison d'etre of the alternative life styles, i.e., their vocal and visible alienation from society, their being "counter-cultures." As many of the social scientists who studied the original middle class turned-off adolescents and young adults in the middle and late 1960's had noted, members of these groups had come from cultured, sophisticated, economically advantaged homes, had been carefully reared by mothers (often well-educated and trained) who had assumed traditional roles and had taken their child-rearing functions seriously and devotedly (14).

The members of the counter-cultures thus were themselves educated and sophisticated. In the values they espoused -- their search for humanism, for meaningful personal relationships, for non-violent solutions, for direct and uninhibited gratifications, for maximizing individual potential and respecting individual difference -- their anti-authority and thus anti-Establishment attitudes were focal. This emphasis brought to mind the possible confrontation that assuming a parenting role would involve, for how could one be a parent without assuming an authority role with the child at least when he was young, dependent, and needed protection? The project felt it was important to see whether counter-culture parents regarded the authority/control dimension as relevant to their child-rearing practices, and how they coped with apparent dissonances in values and behavior. This issue high-lighted one parameter in child rearing unique to the counter-cultures. In the effort to understand this dimension and to search out other parameters that counter-culture parents thought relevant to child growth and development; and in order to see whether a larger scale systematic study could be mounted so that journalistic accounts and anecdotal description could be replaced by empirical data about child-rearing environments and their effects on growth and development, a year of pilot studies was undertaken. The findings of this work will be discussed around five areas, which form the basis of this report:

a. Selection of Alternative Family Environments
b. Accessibility of Populations to Study
c. Values and Attitudes in Regard to Child-Rearing Practices
d. Decisions Regarding Assessments of Children
e. Development of Present Proposed Work.

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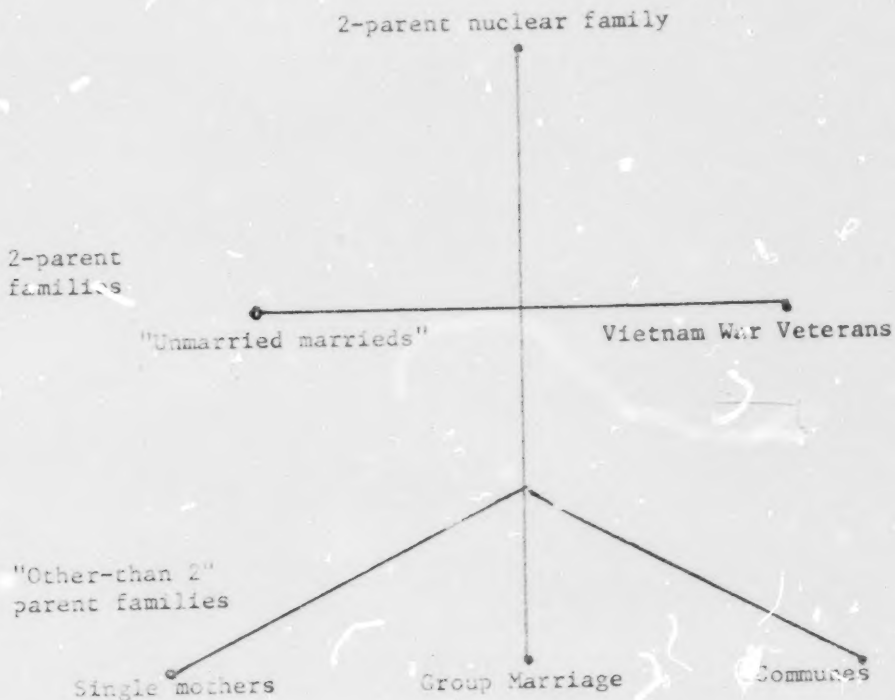
*Best "guesstimates" place the age of the current alternative family style movement at about 7 or 8 years (13).

a. Selection of Alternative Family Environments

What kinds of alternative family settings are most appropriate to discover the kinds of changes central to counter-culture families? To approach this question, alternative family environments were selected which varied along two critical dimensions: (1) multiple caretaking; and (2) the interaction between differing attitudes concerning child-rearing, and different environments and life styles in which children were growing up (15).

Thus, our original model was as follows:



(1) 2-Parent Families:

. The "unmarried marrieds" were defined as a 2-parent family whose structure existed as a social, rather than a legal contract. The literature, and subsequently our pilot work, suggested that this group did in many ways share the philosophy of the "turned-off" middle class counter-cultures (16). Living together as "unmarried marrieds" has little similarity with the "shacking up" of previous generations; or with the large number of "common law" marriages found among the poor who experience constraints and problems

associated with legal marriage. Rather this alternative form of "marriage" involves an ideological commitment to a relationship rather than to joint living by virtue of a new legal status. Rejection of the concept of legal marriage is fundamentally a conviction that the bond of love and trust that holds them together is much more important and stronger than the legal bond authorized by church and state could be (17).

In the family setting, parents spend long periods of time with one another and share the same emotional exchanges of closeness and rejection, desire and repulsion, and certainty and uncertainty about each other as found in more traditional marriages; yet there is a frankness and openness about their status. They do not hide their approach to life; frequently they play both of their names on the mailboxes.

Since the possible instability of the relationship might be critical in a child's development, we explored parental motivations for this life style. While some are not officially married because they refuse to accept the civil contract that attests to the fact that they are now anointed by the establishment -- secular or religious -- others simply do not accept the relevance of the marriage contract to their relationship as it exists for them at the moment, wishing no structural constraints to their "splitting" if things change between them. Still others seek to avoid the evident unhappiness and misery of many legal marriages, especially those in which they grew up. By contrast, living together is seen as representing true maturity in an acceptance and faith they place in one another (18).

Many of the unmarried marrieds are either students or ex-students living close to campus environments, but apparently large numbers of persons are also living in such arrangements outside of campus environments (personal communication, Bureau of the Census, 1971).

In our feasibility studies "unmarried married" couples appeared to share a value system with a strong emphasis on personal relationships and humanism. This and the women's consciousness and liberation movements play a strong philosophical role in determining child-care patterns and attitudes. In all our pilot cases the father was present at birth and enjoyed an active role in early child-caring activities and play with the child. The choice of having the child appeared even more determined than in the traditional family in as much as the option of termination of pregnancy was freely available, without the guilt associated with such termination in the traditional family. From this aspect, and on the basis of data about child care which is elaborated below, we regard this family style as a form of very motivated parenting by two parents, at least during the early periods of development. Children seem to have a close and intimate contact starting in infancy, when they

are often strapped to the mother's back, accompanying her in all her activities, even school classes. There are few times the child is left with others; the more customary practices is to build the child's activities and caretaking to mesh with the parents' availability. Fathers alternate with mothers in staying home -- and share almost all the activities that have to do with the child. In fact, in one family studied in the pilot group, the child called the father "Mama Tom." The intimacy of the family group also extends to encouranging with the child the same affection and openness and expression of sensuous pleasures. This is in line with the rationale of personal commitment and enjoyment for the "unmarried married" relationship.

. The VietNam War Veteran attracted our attention because some of the vocal subgroups (as, e.g., the Vietnam War Veterans Against the War) had been reputed to express their own angers and frustrations about their experiences by vowing to raise their children in such ways that they would not allow themselves to be exposed to the traumatic experiences their fathers had faced. Literature had also suggested that disaffected veterans at the extreme of a continuum of anti-establishment social attitudes might organize their lives and rear their children in unconventional ways (19).

To identify the target subjects, contracts were made with clinicians and investigators who had described this group, and with network informants. This effort showed that few of this group had children or had settled into relationships likely to produce many subjects. Further, the anti-suthority stance observed was not unequivocally attributable to the same forces noted in the counter-cultures; instead, they were regarded as responses to the specific pressures of service, e.g., danger or boredom in a "closed" field situation, by a sufficient number of knowledge observers and clinicians to make us question our original assumption (20). Thus, they were eliminated as a target population.

(2) Other-Than-2-Parent Family Variants:

. The single mother, or unmarried mother, is far from a new phenomenon in our society. Yet there has been a significant change reflecting this alternative way of bearing and raising children in society today (21). It has not only been the "pill" that has emptied the adoption agencies of children available for adoption at birth but also a new perspective on the part of many single parents to keep their children and raise them without the guilt associated with that circumstance in previous generations. (The institutionalized acceptance of the single parent is also evident in their acceptability to agencies as adoptive parents for older, "harder to place" children [illegible]. The women's movement and the "turned off" middle class student were forceful agents in making parenthood a viable option for a woman, whether she is married legally or not. Young women from middle class

families in increasing numbers are allowing their pregnancies to continue and keeping their children after birth (23). Under such conditions a variety of styles of mothering have emerged, since a single mother requires a variety of supports if she is to have some opportunity to become economically independent and socially involved.

Among the family styles which our pilot work encountered as ways frequently chosen by single mothers were small group homes, or boarding homes where a number (4-10) of single mothers live together with their children; foster homes for mother and child; as well as living alone in an apartment. The actual physical arrangements for the child differ among residences but in general mother and child have a room or apartment-like set-up, for their own sleeping, and then share common dining and living room quarters with the larger family unit in group homes. A parent alone usually lives in a small apartment, but many prefer to share a house with a like parent and child. The possibility of children's eating and playing together, sharing toys, etc., is usually considered one of the advantages for children in group living arrangements.

In addition, some communities have developed programs which facilitate a young mother's return to school or work so that she can gain skills necessary for an independent existence (24). Although the programs are still largely educational, some are experimental in providing child-rearing training and social exchanges, suggesting that the Establishment recognizes that complex needs of the "parent in adolescence," must be met in order for the child to grow up in a healthy way. Child care facilities, caretaking arrangements in high schools, training centers, infant caretakers in group home settings reflect the kinds of assistance the community has developed, which means that most children of single parents are exposed to multiple caretaking as early as six weeks of age.

Societal recognition of this family arrangement has also encouraged single parents to move toward developing organizations and social networks which provide them with some of the personal contacts that the early responsibilities of single parenthood might reduce. Unlike parent groups of older persons who were dealing with the consequences of divorce or widowhood, these parents who have opted for single parenthood see themselves as progressive, and experimental [illegible]. The expansion of organizations, such as Momma League and La Leche League, into activity programs, information and training centers, as well as consciousness-raising efforts, also suggest how sensitive the middle class single mother is to her needs and how different from the largely lower-class single mother of yesteryear. A good deal of the organizational activity centers around programming for children, so mothers [illegible] views as to how to rear them in line with their anti-sexist philosophy, and develop social arrangements that may

compensate for non-existent siblings and fathers. Out of those exchanges grow a variety of family arrangements and residences on a more or less temporary basis. Therefore, this population provides some of the most ample opportunity for observing an alternative in family style that has voluntarily, and proudly, turned its back on the "Establishment" nuclear family.

. Communes

Creating a communal alternative to isolated nuclear family living is not in itself a new experience in this country. Some Americans have always sought a new start along with an expression of dissent against the status quo. From what they were dissenting and in what ways they chose to organize their new communal existence varied in past generations as it does for today's communards. Some were based upon religious convictions and others upon economic idealism and a rejection of gross economic inequalities. Some rebelled from authority and attempted to establish a model of governing based upon an absence of central authority, while others sought a strict structure with clear lines of hierarchical authority with ultimate rejection from the community for those who could or would not yield to such authority. Some have relatively long histories such as the Bruderhof, while others such as the intellectual community, "Brook Farm" in Massachusetts, rather rapidly dissolved (26).

The life styles displayed by the current commune movement is perhaps even greater than the well-known historical models, making even definition of this alternative life style problematic; communes vary today in type of membership, organizational structure and general purpose (27). Some are involved in agricultural subsistence, seeking a closeness to the land characterized by the early close-knit communities reported to have existed in our past history, while others are composed of middle class young professionals who do not wish to disengage from the urban scene or its various technological comforts. They vary in size from twelve or less to hundreds. A significant number are based upon religious commitments of various persuasions. Many of the new religious communes are steeped in Eastern philosophy and culture; others are part of the new "Jesus movement" searching for a new way to live out traditional Judeo-Christian convictions. Communes are often formed around common interests, crafts or some unifying goal. They begin with people who find each other, like each other, and share a similar value system. The sharing of political views and convictions is often an important aspect of these intentional communities. Some communes are in fact composed of political activists who see their alternative life styles as a reflection of the social revolution they believe in and the biginning of a radical change in everyday life starting with family organization.

Some communes are reported to be group-marriage oriented. This is apparently an extremely small number. One such group called "The Family" lives in Taos, New Mexico, and has a life style in which they share in common the children of the group, not knowing or caring which individuals have been biologically responsible for the union of sperm and ovum. A similar commune exists nationally with a sizeable base in Los Angeles. Other groups are oriented as extended families, with couples remaining essentially monogamous in their own private quarters, although the partners may change from time to time. Still others live together under a community concept rather than as a family unit, sharing those things that seem to them more effectively achieved in multiple family cooperatives such as expenses, household chores and child care responsibilities. The organization of such groups has been given impetus particularly by the women's consciousness movement.

The lifespan of the current communes varies considerably. Some stay together only for the initial glow of commradery, while others, in increasing numbers develop a stable group of committed members with more long-lasting aspirations for their community. Such issues as organization of work and other aspects of living, interpersonal relationships, economic feasibility and ability to buffer or cope with the outside community harassment have been suggested as germane to the stability of communal arrangements (28). (The increasing stability and a decreasing mobility among individual members has permitted access to some members from outlying and difficult-to-reach areas repeatedly, as we note below.)

The residential arrangements often determine to a large extent adult-child relationships. Living arrangements show variety and ingenuity: tents and cabins in rural areas; apartment houses and motels in cities. Eating and sleeping arrangements for adults and children vary with the specific commune. As the 1970 census found (personal communication, 1972), their usual criteria of common entry-hall and kitchen proven inadequate to the task of categorizing group living arrangements; and many were coded as boarding houses! Separate family houses, children's houses, baby nurseries, and other unit arrangements are common as community houses. Structures vary from lean-to's and huts to elaborate frame and stone buildings.

The number of children varies from commune to commune. In general, the adult/child ratio of 2 1/2:1 cited by Fairfield (29) and Cavan (30) seems to hold. The adults are conscious of the population explosion, and therefore, few parents with more than three biological children are evident; but "families" with 8-10 children are not infrequent (31). Birth, pregnancy and children are esteemed and joyously regarded as an expression of a natural, ecologically-appropriate experience.

Adult-child relations are often determined by proximity of living and particularly of sleeping quarters. Relations with biological parents may be infrequent when children are physically separated from adults and caretakers assigned, as they are in some instances. A child's relations with other adults is also related to the extent to which a hierarchical structure of relations or responsibilities exists (32). Interestingly, a family multiple dwelling arrangement can permit a child to move among households, as when he is in conflict with other household members, lonely for peers, or when his family is "splitting" for a time (33).

Interview data during pilot work elaborated the wide range of child-rearing practices found among communes in relation to caretaking. Detailed interviews with commune parents about their own and their children's life styles permitted us to look for common denominators among practices, and for dimensions in the "family" structure and philosophy that might account for differences. A number of dimensions stood out as possibly salient: age of the child; number of caretakers; area in which the commune existed, as rural/urban; accessibility to resources in the outside community; residential mobility of the immediate family; creedal or non-creedal affiliation (34); a conscious concern with planning (although not "scheduling") for a child's daily activities vs. a laissez-faire attitude toward child activities. Some of these same dimensions seemed to be applicable in determining practices in the other populations of interest to the project. These will be systematically studied for significance in the proposed work.

. Group marriages, defined as a number of two-parent family units living together under the umbrella of a single family structure, also engaged our attention because of the obviously interesting child development issues raised. However, exploration of this family variant in pilot work showed that it was mainly peopled by older, middle aged couples, often with adolescent children, who anticipated that their long-standing marriage might gain some vitality and interest through such a new venture. In this regard, it drew on motivations that have been attributed to group sex experiments in suburbia (35), but with a commitment that involved dramatic changes in many aspects of life style. However, this variant seemed outside our main focus of interest -- as were numerous other provocative new "familes" in which children were being raised, as Lesbian groups, and Synanon children's nurseries. All were eliminated as populations for study.

Therefore, three family styles: the unmarried marrieds; single mothers; and communes were selected for comparison with the 2-parent nuclear family of today.

b. Accessibility of Experimental Populations to Study:

During the past year, this project has conducted pilot work which has been aimed at:

. identifying counter-culture populations who have infants and young children whose needs would customarily not be served in medical and social institutions in the community;

. establishing the accessibility of these groups to study;

. developing a motivational plan in accordance with the value system and philosophy of counter-culture parents that would insure continuance of contact and cooperation over a longitudinal period, from time of child's birth through the first six years of life.

In order to obtain alternative populations who would be in child-bearing age ranges, and who would also represent a variety of family styles, the project developed two strategies for making contact with the following groups who met the following criteria for inclusion in the sample:

. Mother had to be between the ages 16-30;

. Caucasian;

. Living currently with her baby in one of the alternative groups;

. Mother's own family of orientation had to be middle or upper class in socio-economic background and education -- i.e., father in a management, executive, technical or professional occupation and one or both parents with high school and college training;

. Mother's own mother had to have been in the traditional female role in the household;

. Mother's own value system and philosophy had to be "counter-culture", or anti-Establishment.

Two strategies were used to make contact with the parents described above:

. Making contacts with professional or semi-professional agencies with whom these groups were likely to make contact; and

. Establishing contacts with the indigenous network.

The first strategy, making contacts with professional or semi-professional agencies, was implemented as follows:

We developed a directory of referral sources in the target area reflecting:

- health agencies as well as baby clinics, and abortion clinics;
- social agencies, as Family Service Society, and D.P.S.S.
- educational agencies, as Valley State Colleges;
- religious agencies, as Catholic Charities;
- and specific resource agents representing the above services, as priests, high school counselors, pediatricians;
- District Health Officers.

We also made personal contacts with each referral source for the purpose of:

- explaining the objectives of the study;
- establishing our credibility; and
- obtaining nominations of persons who are of interest as potential subjects (i.e. single mothers who keep their babies; mothers in communes, "unamarried married" parents).

We developed a mode of contacting potential subjects to determine their accessibility to study, if they were selected according to sampling requisites; and

We contacted subjects to establish their degree of interest.

After telephone contact was made with agencies likely to develop referral for us, setting up appointments with a decision-making staff member, a letter was sent to the agency, confirming the appointment and describing project goals.

In subsequent personal contacts between our staff members were positively received. Most agencies recognized the social revolution taking place, and were eager to participate in any systematic study or activities that would ultimately give them feedback, and training for their own future interventions with these groups.

Notices announcing the project and its interest in obtaining subjects, were left for distribution and cards giving the project investigator's name, affiliation, and telephone number, were made available. In addition the Statement of Informed Consent which gave any potential subjects information about their individual rights were they to make themselves and their children available, were distributed.

In regard to getting access to parents and babies through the <u>indigenous network</u>, the following <u>strategy</u> was used:

Contacting salient members of the network who then proceed to (a) describe the nature of the population and their locale; (b) nominate parents who might be suitable subjects; (c) and in some cases initiate preliminary contact with these persons.

Initiating a census of the populations under study through (a) directories; (b) lists of relevant organizations; and (c) lists of community and institutional resources with which the populations have contacts (36)

The project staff subsequently carried these contacts further through field studies in communes in such locales as Palo Alto; Mendocino County; Tassahara; Berkeley; eastern Oregon; Taos, New Mexico; Los Angeles; home visits with single mothers, some of whom lived in the community alone or with friends, or in group homes, and school and work programs in Santa Barbara, Pasadena, and San Francisco. A large number of contacts were pursued with organizations of single parents. Contacts with child care centers and child care medical programs, married students' housing organization, also produced "unmarried marrieds" and the more traditional "married married" relationships.

Contacts with the indigenous network were made by personal contact through an individual who was known directly by a member of the project staff or, when known directly, had some introduction through a specific individual. We therefore did not go the route that other investigators have found fruitless: i.e., contacting free clinics, rap centers, hotlines, etc. These organizations tend to be staffed by non-professionals, often volunteers, and are usually understaffed, so that any request seems burdensome. They resist, too, being "guinea pigs" in projects that do not provide real services for the clientele. Contacts by Establishment groups are seen as "rip-off". Further, we know that continuity of contact would be problematic since volunteer help shows a rapid turn-over; and since finding support for such groups is voluntary, informal, and the "feast-or-famine" attitude that this creates, we knew would affect our reception.

Therefore, our "network" contacts were personalized and carefully developed on a 1:1 basis - so that our trained interviewers established the kind of "clinical" contacts that showed our interest in the individual child. We tried to give each parent the notion that we were learning about new styles of child development from them, the pioneers - which was indeed the case.

To support this 1:1 approach, we maintained an open collect telephone line so that we could be called at any time and we wrote a letter of thanks following each interview or visit.

In the course of the year's work we developed a number of "tests" to see how readily we could maintain contact with the 50 parents who represented

our pilot population. Among the tests were the following:

. In some cases appointments for interviews were scheduled over a number of spaced sessions to see if parents would continue to come to project offices;

. Eleven subjects in rural communes in the San Francisco area, were contacted by mail or telephone to bring their children to UCLA for exploratory psychological assessment on a specified day and time. All subjects were found to be residing at their original addresses when contacted and complied.

. Prior to an NIMH Site visit in July, all 50 subjects were contacted by telephone or personal visit to establish whether they could be contacted within one or 2 days, if needed. All but a small group in eastern Oregon were reached. Addresses were obtained even for two parents living now in Mexico, by going through the original network (in this case, teachers of the La Maze method) who had originally referred them to the project.

. Fathers consented to participate in interviews, both alone and jointly with mothers. Their desire to be part of the project is a datum of interest about child-rearing, and suggests that the project is seen as recognizing the changing role of father in the new family styles where their role as parent and caretaker is being re-emphasized (37).

Thus our pilot work was able to demonstrate:

. That the populations under investigation can be accessed, once both appropriate professional and indigenous networks were identified and favorable contacts initiated.

. Experienced clinical interviewers seem to have no difficulty in establishing excellent rapport with the population, without becoming participant observers in the living style.

. Middle-aged interviewers seemed to be readily, even warmly, accepted by these young groups. The dynamics of this surprising finding has merited group discussion, because it was initially thought that only indigenous members of the population "under 30" would be acceptable to those groups.

. Parents were eager to participate in interviews and assessments focused on their children; however, in addition, they volunteered extensive information on their own backgrounds and development, so that interviews can also provide data about the history, attitudes, needs and aspirations of the parents (38). Present interview schedules have been re-structured in this direction.

Results of a sampling study conducted in the West Valley area of Los Angeles, indicated that the usual professional services agencies have contact with few members of the potential population. In a three month test period

thirty agencies had an average of 1.8 pregnant women as clients who met criteria of the project. Further, when agency personnel were used as the interface interpreting the project to potential subjects, follow through was poor. This finding contrasts with the almost 100% success obtained when project staff made contact with the indigenous network through the strategy described above.

While three West Coast sites were originally proposed to permit estimates of the generalizability of the population, a review of cost factors led to a decision to recruit subjects from the Los Angeles area in so far as possible, and from the San Francisco, Northern California and eastern Oregon areas as necessary. Although no definitive studies have been undertaken, informal reports and visits suggest that no major differences in the family styles of populations under study exist between East Coast and West Coast, the two areas in which they seem to be most abundant (39).

Incentives for subject continuance:

Pilot work experimented with a number of ways of first establishing credibility of the project and of the interviewers; and then, reinforcing initial contacts so that continuance in the project would be maintained over time. Cards with the principal investigator's and project's name and address were printed and distributed; announcements about the project were printed for distribution. Subsequent contacts were followed up on a personal basis by the same interviewer so clinical rapport could be established.

As remuneration for time and effort, pilot funds permitted paying subjects $5 for each hour of interviewing or assessment of the child. A University requisite demanded that Social Security numbers and addresses of subjects be provided prior to payment. Despite project staff's anxiety about this requisite, subjects offered no resistance to providing this information. However, in the course of the interviewing a number of mothers, particularly those in rural and inaccessible areas, mentioned that they would welcome a physician seeing their child. This led the project to explore the possibility of offering payment for ambulatory pediatric services as an incentive for continuance over the six year longitudinal study.

Such a medical plan as incentive offers the opportunity to get outside validating information on the (a) patterns of health and illness of these populations; and (b) their use of health delivery services, an area of interest because this alienated group characteristically underuses services provided by the Establishment (40). A pediatric incentive plan (PIP) which will pay out patient pediatric costs up to $80 per annum per child plus an annual examination fee has grown out of this pilot work. Encounter forms have been developed to facilitate standardized recording by providers of service and facilitate routine transmittal to the project data on health conditions and use of organized services.

c. Values and Attitudes in Regard to Child-Rearing

Data from detailed interviews were analyzed to provide a picture of current child-rearing practices, attitudes and value systems of parents from each population. The children around whom the interviews were focused ranged from 1 month to 4 years, so none were candidates for the proposed study. Interviews provided such data as demographic and personal background information on parents; marital and work status at time of child's birth; current living arrangement; birth; medical and developmental history of the child; attitudes and practices concerning eating, sleeping, discipline, sex, rules, scheduling; child problem areas; social and emotional development; aspirations for the child, etc.

Data were categorized and scaled for comparative analysis of environments and child-rearing practices and attitudes. Findings showed some similarities in practices that had been attributed solely to some counter-cultures. Breast feeding is now routine in young mothers, e.g. Also in all groups,babies are carried on the mother's back and accompany her most of the time, so there is almost constant physical proximity between mother and child in the first year of life. In most areas, however, there was considerable range in practices stemming from shared attitudes and values so that family groups could be scaled in terms of frequency with which specific practices are adopted. Some of the attitudes and value-systems found commonly in experimental groups that are likely to effect a child's development are as follows:

. Intense mother-child relationship from birth through the first two or two and a half years, with a clear break in this pattern in the direction of independence and self-reliance at 2 1/2 or 3 years. The latter comes at a time when the youngster has been weaned (breast-feeding may extend until this time), and is mobile, and when the mother begins to think of herself and her own needs and wishes to return to previous activities.

. At the same time that an intense attachment to a single caretaker is fostered, there is also an attempt to develop in the child a generalized sense of trust to other care-taking adults. This may be through the use of multiple caretakers, or in the switching of infants among young mothers for breast feeding. Multiple caretakers sometimes have differences in perspectives around caretaking, making for inconsistencies. In fact, commune members report that differences over child-rearing are a common source of family difficulty.

. Good health, in line with a desire for wholesomeness and a oneness with the environment, assumes important proportions. Many experiences, like childbirth, are considered to be "natural," rather than "illnesses." Natural foods comprise the bulk of the diet; in most cases children's dietary input is restricted in regard to sweets and other "junk" food. Dependence on institutionalized medical and dental services is limited to emergencies, with self-

help medical and pharmacological expertise encouraged. Few preventive interventions are sought.

. While non-violence is generally espoused among counter-culture groups, certain dissonant practices are seen in regard to the handling of aggressive behaviors between children, and in parental disciplinary attitudes and practices. In line with parental desires for each child to be assertive (and particularly for girls on whom that "passive role has been foisted by stereotypic cultural attitudes") generally children are allowed to work out relationships with peers without adult interference; in fact, direct interrelations are fostered. Only the demands of safety take precedence. Again, in regard to discipline, although the perpetration of violence is seen as a violation of individuality -- and the child is seen as having rights as an individual -- parents acknowledge that there are times when his own needs take precedence over the child's and demand that he impose discipline, even physical punishment. Discipline ranging over the spectrum from total non-violence to "an eye for an eye" has been identified.

. Humanistic and interpersonal relationships and the direct expression of affectional needs are highly valued. In line with this, there is a desire to cast off artificial repression of sexuality and intimacy. For the child this means exposure to adult nudity and observation of sexual activity, and a certain permissiveness around instinctual drives which may or may not go with opportunities for acting out. There are differences among and within family styles in regard to the latter; but in general parents aim for more freedom in their children and earlier sophistication.

. Child-peer relationships become potent socializing agents, since early independence from mother often moves a child into "juvenile groups" as replacement. Peers are dependent upon for support and decision; and age mates are closely modelled.

. Early decision-making is encouraged in the child in line with the philosophy that a child has individual rights, and has a role in participatory democracy. In some family groups, conscious politicization of children is encouraged. Group decision-making by parents is modelled by children as an important mode for solving problems.

. Parents are ambivalent about serving as models for identification. They shrink from "putting their trip" on the child; yet they admit to value and life style preferences, and thus reinforce these behaviors of the child which are consonant with their attitudes. They also resist serving as identification models because of their more or less consistent acceptance of an anti-sexist philosophy; thus, mothers are not willing to have their girls identify with them as not-completely-emancipated women; similarly with boys and males.

. Achievement striving is played down, except for the desire to become competent and thus fulfill individual potential and creativity. Competition as a motivational force is repressed. Sensory impressions, intuition, the occult as opposed to the rational are appropriate data for the enhancement of creativity. Children are expected to be able to distinguish what is appropriate behavior within the "family" and for the "outside world."

. Because materialistic values are tied in with technological advance and non-humanistic goals, dependence on possessions and material objects is minimized whenever possible. Children have few toys. Personally-owned objects are minimal as compared with objects that are shared by the group, when the child is in a "group family." Also, children observe adults proudly "ripping off" the outside world, and ignoring social contracts involving personal ownership.

The variability found in the alternative family groups in implementing these general child-rearing attitudes led the project to recommend the following approaches so far as research strategy for a major longitudinal effort is concerned.

. Subjects should be selected to represent as much variety or as many extremes in child-rearing practices as possible within the four populations. Subjects should thus be chosen on a case basis, rather than selecting all members within a few family groups. In this way, the danger of obtaining skewed patterns of child-rearing or unrepresentative environments is mitigated.

. Also, because so many aspects of the child-rearing environment are involved, the selection of variables to study should be based on a theoretical rationale, i.e., environmental conditions considered to be most salient for the child's growth and development in the physical health, cognitive and socio-emotional areas at respective ages. In line with the approach to measurement of environments espoused by Dave and Wolf (41), a list of environmental characteristics consisting of specific behaviors of parents likely to have implications related to physical growth and development, cognitive and socio-emotional growth should be developed. Characteristics chosen can then be measured in ways appropriate to each of the environmental milieus under study. As part of the pilot project studies, a program of research embodying these perspectives was detailed.

d. Decisions Regarding Assessments of Children

Three main questions were explored during the feasibility year regarding assessment of the infant and young child by standardized techniques:

. suitability of such tests as Bayley Scales of Infant Development and Stanford-Binet LM for the children in alternative environments;

. acceptability by parents of the testing procedures, and a willingness to cooperate as necessary, as in the Vineland Social Maturity Scale;

. transportability of the Newborn Neurological Examination (42) to the field for non-hospital birth deliveries.

To answer the first two questions, eleven pilot children, aged two months through forty four months were tested with appropriate instruments. The eight younger children were administered the Bayley Scale and the Vineland. Median scores were as follows: Vineland 104; Bayley Mental Scale 100; Motor Scale 98. The Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test and the Binet were given to the three children over two years. Scores on these tests were also in the average range. An analysis of the PPVT items suggested that individual children had been exposed to books and pictures.

The initial study of these children indicates that the selected measures are well accepted by the children and parents, and that results would indicate that these children are not being raised in such unusual environments that standard measuring instruments are not appropriate. Results of these variant life styles seem within the bounds of instruments used to assess children in environments upon which the tests were validated. However, with the variety of life styles to be studied, it will of course be necessary to assess a variety of children and to utilize matching samples of middle class children as a comparison. Preliminary impressions include the following: for children of college trained mothers, scores tend to cluster remarkably close to average. Some possible language gaps reflecting the enrivonment were observed (not recognizing "bed," as an example) and being exposed to a picture-book vocabulary. The apparently wide use of multiple caretakers was suggested by the general ease with which the children accepted the examination procedures with a "stranger." Repeated measures three to six months apart are essential for reliability of results, particularly at those ages where major motor tasks or language task were emerging (i.e., walking and talking).

Although we are reasonably certain that standard testing procedures can be used with children in alternative family samples, we are not thereby implying that additional tests or observational measures are not needed as well. Other measures, particularly interview, observational and ethnographic data, which incorporate the alternative families' own views of the world and child training, are also necessary. Such data, gathered with the families' own interests and points of view in mind, can supplement the standardized assessment measures.

In an attempt to determine the feasibility of performing perinatal evaluations

for those children born outside of hospitals, the Newborn Neurological Examination was administered by a pediatrician who was trained at the UCLA Pediatrics Clinic to three babies born in a variety of home settings within the first five days. Three hospital infants were also tested to assess comparative facility. No problems were encountered in administration since the test is simple, quick and takes little equipment. In addition, the Newborn Behavior Scale recently developed by Brazelton (1971) is undergoing preliminary study for suitability. Since this scale is notable for its measures of attention and alertness, and its usefulness in some cross-cultural studies (43), and because some longitudinal data are emerging bearing on its predictive capacity (Brazelton, personal communication, (1972), it holds considerable interest.

In a similar vein, the Casati-Lezine form of the Piagetian Tests of Sensori-Motor Development (44) should be studied for its usefulness as an indicator of rate of development in children in these population. Preliminary normative longitudinal data on term and premature babies show consisten rates of development across diverse sub-cultural group (45).

e. Proposal for a Large-scale Longitudinal Study of Children in Alternative Families

Our pilot studies suggest that the proposed complex longitudinal study of alternative family populations is feasible. Furthermore, preliminary data have provided evidence for the importance of this work. Questions of the effects of alternative life styles in the course of prenatal and postnatal growth and development are surely of considerable interest to the general study of child development. The variety of possible human experience is larger than that which has been studied in detail to date, and it is by no means certain that the broad principles and insight that have been developed will be adequate or appropriate to predict what may turn out to be significant physical and psychological characteristics that may develop under a broader range of child-rearing environments. If it were to turn out that current knowledge and theory were completely adequate for understanding and predicting the consequences of various alternative life style child-rearing environments, the result would be a very significant validation of current constructs and so would be of great importance to the field.

Our concern with exploring variations in child-rearing patterns within our culture is particularly important in the cross-cultural study of infant growth and development. Werner (46) has reviewed the comparative data in this field, and suggests a number of current research questions which our study design provides evidence of. Our alternative families include many of the situational and environmental variables (such as multiple caretaking) often found in cross-cultural studies. Yet the families at the same time share many other cultural and genetic characteristics usually confounded in cross-cultural research.

Prior to the pilot endeavor, we were less clear that the study could have broad social implications. Although we do not have data that yield numerical estimates of the number of children directly affected, it seems plausible

that the general order of magnitude of numbers of children to which the study is directed is a few thousand per year, possibly 0.1 per cent of births.

The broad social interest of the study, then, does not stem from the numbers of children involved. It stems rather than the pilot data suggesting that the alternative life styles represent a concentrated form of attitudes, values, and behaviors, that are broadly represented in contemporary society, but which are not recognized as such because they are more amorphous and poorly crystallized. Even at a superficial level it is clear that much that passes through the communication media -- TV, movies, magazines, books, newspapers -- finds a more logically consistent expression in some of the "alternative life styles" than in the bulk of society, and yet, elements seem to be broadly based in general society (47). This appears to be the case with child-rearing practices too, for pilot work showed that many of the parental behaviors and values in regard to children that had been attributed to the counter-cultures in literature, journalism and popular myth, were in actuality also found to be characteristic of parents who were living in the nuclear two-parent family today. To note a few examples: breast feeding was the only mode of feeding in control and experimental samples independence and self-reliance was fostered in all children as they reach preschool age, with many of the same practices being used across populations to encourage this characteristic; meaningful interpersonal relationships were valued over the encouragement of intellectual resources.

Thus, since alternate family styles embody a great deal that is of considerable importance to society at large, the project staff wondered if it would not be desirable that research data be regularly fed into existing institutions which are concerned with the health, education and welfare of children. Most social institutions show considerable lag in sensing and in responding to changes in need. Fashions in dress, in speech, and others, e.g., respond fairly rapidly, and yet in even these matters there is a substantial inertial lag. In the institutions which are rapid responders it is quite difficult to pick out in advance the patterns that will be reinforced, found acceptable, and picked up - or found in resonance with the times. Among the more sluggish responders the task of sensing the directions of change is easier, although it is still difficult to predict how any particular institution will respond to these changes. However, because some institutions that deal with children, as public schools, and in particular the high schools and colleges, are already appearing to "resonate" to many of the same elements that the alternate life style embodies, it seems a safe prediction that data on new attitudes and values in regard to child-rearing would be welcomed. In preparing to adapt to the current and future school population, particularly at the kindergarten and elementary levels, the schools should find it advantageous to incorporate knowledge and insight gained from study of child-rearing among alternate style groups. Both teachers and administrators can use experience with the more complete manifestation of the "counter cultures" in order to recognize and accommodate to the changes

in attitudes to authority that are already appearing in schools and that will be accentuated as alterations in child-rearing appear. It is not only the extreme cases that are considered, but the large numbers of students whose backgrounds will reflect to various degrees accommodation along somewhat similar lines to the same driving forces that have led to the alternative life styles.

In order to have a regular mechanism for facilitating use of research data by such existing institutions a utilization plan might be an offshoot or further development of the proposal work. This was deemed desirable for a number of reasons. As noted above, the pilot findings suggest that what we are studying in a more homogeneous form is reflecting changes appearing in an amorphous and uncrystallized form in "straight" society; thus the pertinence of the work to larger social trends. Secondly, reports of health and social service institutions in the last five years point to their inability to recognize and to adapt to the changes in needs of the changing social order, and to develop service patterns appropriate to today and tomorrow; thus their narrowing usefulness (48). Existing agencies and institutions are known to handle their growing obsolescence by constricting service patterns (49): i.e., working with increasingly narrowly-defined populations, those which are able to use services as defined by the agencies many years back; and by turning away from those major segments of the population (young children and young parents particularly) who are increasingly evolving in their needs, aspirations, and attitudes to meet their changing, overpopulated, over-crowded environment. Third, in order for the proposed research to remain viable over its extended period, some feedback could thus be obtained on early findings as they emerge, so that subsequent work can be planned accordingly.

In the final phase of the pilot year, a research proposal was designed on the basis of the findings of the feasibility studies. The aims of the proposal was as follows:

1. To investigate the effects of child-rearing practices, attitudes and values in alternative family styles measured over time on the physical, cognitive and socio-emotional development measured over the same time period: i.e., birth through three years of age;

2. To compare these effects with the physical and psychological development of children raised in the 2-parent nuclear family of today.

3. To assess the implications of the findings in regard to cognitive development of children in contemporary family styles for the social, medical and educational institutions with which they currently or in the future will interface.

The project has been informed that support for the proposed work has been approved by the Advisory Mental Health Council, and that moneys to initiate the project will be forthcoming around December 1, 1973 from the National Institute of Mental Health.

II. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FROM PROJECT

Systematic study of a number of alternative family styles led to the selection of three counter-culture groups as suitable for the anticipated research: families who live in communes; single mothers who keep their children; and "unmarried married" families whose marital relationship is bound by social, rather than legal, contract. Each was comprised of young adult Caucasians who themselves had been raised in middle class or upper middle class families, usually in advantaged circumstances, and who had become "turned off" from the Establishment. All were now living in styles which attested to their disavowal of "straight" society's values and behaviors. As a control group, young mothers who were currently living in the more traditional two-parent nuclear family were selected.

Selection of this control group was related to pilot findings which were identified with the counter-cultures or alternative life style groups were also characteristic of practices of young contemporary parents within the Establishment. It became apparent that the counter-culture families were presenting, in a homogenous and "test tube" fashion, trends and directions in child-rearing practices and attitudes which were already making their appearance in a less crystallized and more amorphous form in larger society. It could be said, therefore, that the alternative family styles were offering a unique opportunity to study future child-rearing attitudes and practices before they become institutionalized. This pilot finding gave an important developmental significance to the proposed research program that enhanced the major contribution the study would make to the understanding of a number of theoretical and pragmatic issues in the area of child development.

Pilot work also showed that the study populations were accessible, and even eager, for study, and responded favorably to interviews. Populations in outlying and inaccessible communities brought their children to project offices over a six-month period for examinations, as requested. The study population also participated in formulating with project staff a Pediatric Incentive Plan as an incentive for maintaining contact with the project over the six years of the longitudinal effort.

Interviews provided evidence of marked changes in values, beliefs, and aspirations for children in the study populations. For example, a strong regeneration of interest in breast feeding and natural childbirth was noted, in line with the philosophy that birth is not regarded as an illness but rather as a normal developmental phenomenon. This interest goes along with a turning away from established medical and pediatric institutions, and a reliance on folk medicine and a self-help philosophy.

The groups highly value interpersonal and social relationships, in line with their humanistic philosophy. Thus, the study populations foster strong dependent ties between infant and mother, which are enhanced through a great deal of tactile contact. This strong dependent relationship endures

over the first two years; and then is often abruptly followed by a demand for a show of independence and self-reliance in the child. This latter occurs at the time when the child is becoming mobile and the mother herself is beginning to feel a need for findins gratifications for her own personal needs. At this early point in the child's development, then, the peer group moves into a prominent role as an important socializing agent, serving as teacher, disciplinarian, and sibling.

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